

'To Kill a Mockingbird' Removed From School in Mississippi

 www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/us/to-kill-a-mockingbird-biloxi.html

By CHRISTINA CARON

"To Kill a Mockingbird" has long been a popular and controversial book. Harper, via Associated Press

1 Eighth graders in Biloxi, Miss., will no longer be required to read "To Kill a Mockingbird," Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about racial inequality and the civil rights movement that has been taught in countless classrooms and influenced generations of readers.

2 Kenny Holloway, the vice president of the Biloxi School Board, told The Sun Herald there had been complaints about the book.

3 "There is some language in the book that makes people uncomfortable, and we can teach the same lesson with other books," he said. "It's still in our library. But they're going to use another book in the eighth-grade course."

It was not immediately clear if the book had already been removed from the curriculum. The district, Biloxi Public Schools, did not respond to phone calls and emails for comment on Monday.

The superintendent, Arthur McMillan, did not elaborate on when the book was pulled, instead providing a statement to The Sun Herald that said the resources used to teach students "may change periodically."

"We always strive to do what is best for our students and staff to continue to perform at the highest level," he said.

The news was criticized by Arne Duncan, the former secretary of education in the Obama administration, and others on Twitter.

When school districts remove 'To Kill A Mockingbird' from the reading list, we know we have real problems. <https://t.co/TF3fGZmvXp>

— Arne Duncan (@arneduncan) October 14, 2017

Senator Ben Sasse, Republican of Nebraska, encouraged parents to voice their disapproval.

Engaged parents should call the school district with the clear message: Our kids are tough enough to read a real book. <https://t.co/g1FGXc3mfc>

— Ben Sasse (@BenSasse) October 14, 2017

The writer and producer Dominic Mitchell tweeted that the decision was "censorship" at its worst.

"To Kill a Mockingbird" has sold more than 40 million copies since it was published in 1960.

The novel is set during the Depression in a small Alabama town where a black man is accused of raping a white woman. Its candid exploration of racism and discrimination has been a beacon for controversy.

The book has been banned multiple times, according to the American Library Association, often at the request of

black parents and students who were concerned about the book's racial epithets.

The book last year was [temporarily removed](#) from the library shelves of a school district in Virginia along with "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" after a parent of a biracial student complained that the language in the novels was divisive. The Accomack County School Board [voted to reinstate both books](#) less than a week later.

The Sun Herald published [an editorial](#) on Friday criticizing the Mississippi school board's decision.

"By removing 'Mockingbird,' Biloxi has missed a wonderful opportunity to have a frank discussion with their children why 'reasonable people go stark raving mad,'" the editorial said. "Perhaps if we talked about race more there would be fewer people cavalierly tossing out hurtful racist language."

1. Do you agree with the quotes in the last paragraph? Why or why not?
2. Create a pro/con t-chart below and list as many of each as you can for banning this book in schools.